

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Transfer of 1,500 Acre-Feet of Replacement Water from Patterson Irrigation District to Del Puerto Water District - 2009

Draft FONSI-09-141

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U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
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Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, the South-Central California Area Office of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), has determined that the approval for Patterson Irrigation District (PID) to transfer 1,500 acre-feet (AF) of its Replacement Water to Del Puerto Water District (DPWD) is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is supported by Reclamation's Final Environmental Assessment (EA) number EA-09-141, *Transfer of 1,500 Acre-Feet of Replacement Water from Patterson Irrigation District to Del Puerto Water District - 2009*, and is hereby incorporated by reference.

Background

In October 2008, PID approached Reclamation with a request to transfer 2,200 AF of its Replacement Water to DPWD during the 2009 oncontract water year (March 1st through February 28th, 2010). Reclamation analyzed the proposed transfer in document number, *EA-08-94 Patterson Irrigation District One-Time Delivery of Replacement Water to Del Puerto Water District*, and FONSI-09-84 was signed on August 7, 2009. Both EA/FONSI-08-94 are hereby incorporated by reference.

In respect to EA/FONSI-08-94, PID has since determined that it could transfer some of its varied water resources to a willing party and still be able to meet the in-district demand of its water users in 2009. In September 2009, PID requested that Reclamation approve the district's desire to transfer an additional 1,500 AF of its Replacement Water to DPWD.

Findings

Water Resources

Reclamation will continue to convey and deliver CVP water to both PID and DPWD via the DMC, pursuant to their respective CVP contracts and as water is available. PID's Replacement Water will continue to be conveyed in the DMC for normal delivery into its turnouts; however, the Proposed Action will include additional points-of-delivery for a portion of the Replacement Water to be diverted into DPWD's existing turnouts. There will be no negative impacts to the DMC or its normal functions and operations as conditions would remain the same as current conditions.

PID has had an excess water supply in past years and does not expect to pump any additional groundwater as the transfer of 1,500 AF to DPWD will still leave PID with the ability to meet the irrigation needs of its water users. Therefore, there will be no impacts to the underlying groundwater subbasin.

Land Use

PID will continue to use the remaining balance of the Replacement Water as part of their varied water resources to irrigate existing farmlands. PID historically has and will continue to detach lands as a result of landowners requesting municipal and industrial water so that PID can remain

an entirely agricultural district. Reclamation has no authority over land use changes in PID and any such change is not a result of the Proposed Action. DPWD would use the Replacement Water to irrigate and maintain their existing permanent crops.

Conditions will remain the same as existing conditions; therefore, no changes to land use will occur in PID and DPWD.

Biological Resources

Most of the habitat types required by species protected by the Endangered Species Act do not occur in the project area. The Proposed Action would not involve the conversion of any land fallowed and untilled for three or more years. Such actions would require subsequent environmental review. The Proposed Action also would not change the land use patterns of the cultivated or fallowed fields that do have some value to listed species or birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Due to capacity limitations and water quality restrictions in the DMC, there would be no effects on listed fish species. No critical habitat occurs within the area affected by the Proposed Action and so none of the primary constituent elements of any critical habitat would be affected. Any encountered biological resources are likely to be those associated with actively cultivated land. Since no natural stream courses or additional surface water pumping would occur, there would be no effects on listed fish species.

The short duration of the water availability, the requirement that no native lands be converted without consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the stringent requirements for transfers under applicable laws will preclude any impacts to wildlife, whether federally listed or not.

Cultural Resources

The Proposed Action involves redistributing water through existing Federal facilities. There will be no modification of water conveyance facilities and no activities that would result in new construction. There will be no impacts to cultural resources.

Indian Trust Assets

Approval of the transfer between PID and DPWD would not involve any construction and would utilize existing conveyance facilities. There are no tribes possessing legal property interests held in trust by the United States in the water, nor is there such a property interest in the lands designated to receive the water in the Proposed Action; therefore, this action will have no effect on Indian Trust Assets (ITA). The nearest ITA is the Chicken Ranch Rancheria approximately 45 miles northeast of the project location.

Socioeconomic Resources

The Proposed Action will provide supplemental water to DPWD to sustain their existing crops and at the same time still provide sufficient irrigation water for landowners in PID. Conditions will remain the same as existing conditions and there will be no impacts to socioeconomic resources.

Environmental Justice

The Proposed Action will not affect low-income or disadvantaged populations within the districts by not causing dislocation, changes in employment, or increase flood, drought, or disease. Employment opportunities for low-income wage earners and minority population groups would be within historical conditions. Disadvantaged populations will not be subject to disproportionate impacts.

The Proposed Action does not propose any features that would result in adverse human health or environmental effects, have any physical effects on minority or low-income populations, and/or alter socioeconomic conditions of populations that reside or work in the vicinity of the Proposed Action.

Cumulative Impacts

As in the past, hydrological conditions and other factors are likely to result in fluctuating water supplies and this drives requests for water service actions. Water districts aim to provide water to their customers based on available water supplies and timing, all while attempting to minimize costs. Farmers irrigate and grow crops based on these conditions and factors, and a myriad of water service actions are approved and executed each year to facilitate water needs. Each water service transaction involving Reclamation undergoes environmental review prior to approval. In addition, the Proposed Action is a one-time, temporary transfer; therefore, when added to other water service actions, the Proposed Action would not result in cumulative effects to resources beyond historical fluctuations and conditions.

Reclamation approved a similar project in August 2009 where EA/FONSI-08-94 analyzed the potential impacts from transferring 2,200 AF of PID's Replacement Water to DPWD. This action was also a one-time, temporary transfer that did not contribute to cumulative effects to resources beyond historical fluctuations and conditions.